

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01
ICA-11 ACDA-12 AID-05 ARA-10 /122 W
-----039508 191130Z /10

R 131340Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6376
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
USLO PEKING
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KIGALI 1128

V.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PEPR, RW
SUBJECT: "CHINA OPTION" COLORS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

REF: (A) KIGALI 1104; (B) KIGALI 1099 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: KIGALI'S MONTHLY TRENDS REPORT FOR JUNE
(REF A) ANALYZED RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN RWANDAN RELATIONS
WITH PEKING AND PYONGYANG, FOLLOWING PRESIDENT
HABYARIMANA'S STATE VISITS TO THOSE CAPITALS. REFTEL B
UPDATES THAT REPORT WITH INFO ON VISIT HERE, ONLY DAYS
AFTER PRESIDENT'S RETURN, OF MAJOR CHINESE MILITARY
MISSION.

2. PRESENT MESSAGE REPORTS MANIFESTATIONS OF "CHINA
OPTION" STARKLY APPARENT AT RWANDAN NATIONAL DAY
CELEBRATIONS JULY 5, AND IT REFLECTS UPON SIGNIFICANCE
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OF GROWING COZINESS WITH PRC AND DPRK FOR OUR OWN INTERESTS
IN RWANDA (AND PERHAPS ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA). LEN BURDEN IS
THAT RWANDA MAY BE MISREADING USG SIGNALS AS TACIT SUPPORT
FOR "CHINA OPTION," AN ERROR WHICH COULD BE DISTINCTLY
HARMFUL TO OUR LONGER-TERM INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

3. CELEBRATING THE CHINA OPTION: ON HEELS OF PRESIDENT'S

FAR EAST TRIP, WE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS TO HAVE AN ORIENTAL FLAVOR. BUT FEW WESTERNERS WERE READY FOR DEGREE OF DIFFERENCE FROM LAST YEAR'S COLORFUL, FOLKLORIC FESTIVAL.

-- THIS YEAR, PARADING PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN, KOREAN-TRAINED, WERE NO LONGER RAG-TAG BUT REGIMENTED, SCREAMING CHEERS ON CUE AND WAPING FOLDED TISSUE PAPER FANS IN RWANDAN FLAG COLORS WHILE THEY PERFORMED CALESTHENICS EN MASSE.

-- SECONDARY SCHOOLERS, RATHER THAN PARADING THEIR PGS AND CHICKENS, SAT RANGED IN BLEACHERS AND DID PANORAMIC CARD STUNTS DISPLAYING KOREAN-PAINTED PORTRAITS OF SUN-BEAMING PRESIDENT AND REVOLUTIONARY SLOGANS IN KINYARWANDA ("CRUSH THE IMPERIALISTS", "TECHNOLOGY WILL TRIUMPH", "LOVE THE PARTY").

-- ARMY TROOPS, INSTEAD OF DISPLAYING CIVIC ACTION SKILLS, PUT ON HELMETS, FIXED BAYONETS, AND PERFORMED GROTESQUE LOCK-STEP BALLET OF CRUSHING ENEMY.

--EVEN ARMY BAND, HITHERTO FAMOUS FOR OFF-KEY RENDITIONS OF "JINGLE BELLS," PERFORMED HOUR-LONG KOREAN COMPOSITION TO ACCOMPANY MASSED MARCHERS' MOVEMENTS.

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4. (ENTIRE CEREMONY WAS NOT THUS, HOWEVER: TRADITIONAL PARADE SHOWING FRUITS OF DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS STILL FEATURED COMMUNITY LEVEL ACHIEVEMENTS AND PRIVATE ENTREPRENEUR CONTRIBUTIONS. BUT THIS YEAR, MUCH OF PUBLIC'S VIEW WAS BLOCKED BY THAT AWFUL GRANDSTAND AND ITS MINDLESS CARD-WAVERS.)

5. CHINESE MILITARY DELEGATION WERE CHAUFFEURED TO TRIBUNE AND ESCORTED TO PLACES OF HONOR -- EVERYONE ELSE WALKED FROM STREET TO THEIR SEATS. SOME FIFTEEN NORTH KOREANS WERE SEATED CLOSE BY (ONLY TWO EACH WERE INVITED FROM OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS). MOBILE LOUDSPEAKERS -- GIFTS OF KOREAN PEOPLE -- PLAYED MARTIAL AND CHORAL MUSIC RECORDED, IN KINYARWANDA, BY CHINESE AND NORTH KOREANS ESPECIALLY FOR HABYARIMANA'S FAR EAST TRIP. NATIONAL BALLET WENT THROUGH ITS PACES, BUT EVEN TRADITIONAL DANCES SEEMED TO TAKE ON AN ASIAN COLORATION.

6. OFFICIAL PRESS BULLETIN COINCIDING WITH CELEBRATIONS HEAPED PRAISE UPON CHINESE AND KOREANS (MUCH MORE THE FORMER), STRESSING HARD-WORKING, LONG-SUFFERING CHARACTER OF BOTH PEOPLES AND THEIR CEASELESS FIGHT TO OVERCOME

IMPERIALIST OPPRESSION. AND IT LAUDED GENEROUS AND FRATERNAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, UNENCUMBERED BY POLITICAL STRINGS OR HUMILIATING CONDITIONS. PRIVATELY, SOME RWANDANS WHO ACCOMPANIED PRESIDENT TO FAR EAST REMARKED TO US HOW IMPRESSED THEY HAD BEEN AT "LIBERALISM" ANDR CONTENDING POINTS OF VIEW THEY FOUND AMONG CHINESE PEOPLE--NOT AT ALL THE STIFFLY REGIMENTED AND DISCIPLINED SOCIETY THEY EXPECTED TO FIND.

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7. NOW WE LEARN THAT THE CHINESE ARE OPENING A TWO-WEEK TRADE FAIR (IN KIGALI, YET*) ON JULY 17 AND THAT THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR WILL RECEIVE A FIRST-EVER INVITATION TO THAT EVENT.

8. YELLOW PERIL? REMARKABLE HOW MANY RWANDAN FRIENDS, WHO LATELY HAD SHARED WITH US THEIR CONCERN AT SOVIET/ CUBAN INROADS AND APPEALED FOR OUR AID, SEEMED TO EXPECT US TO SHARE THEIR JOY IN CELEBRATING RWANDAN/CHINESE RAPPROACHMENT. DID THIS NOT, THEY ASKED US, COINCIDE WITH U.S. STRATEGY DESIGNED TO PLAY OFF ONE COMMUNIST CAMP AGAINST THE OTHER? WAS THIS NOT WHY PRES. CARTER'S NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR ALSO TRAVELED TO PEKING? SOME WERE TAKEN ABACK BY OUR DENIALS. OTHERS WARNED

THAT WE HAD ALL BETTER RECOGNIZE THAT CHINESE WERE
WORLD'S NEWEST AND MOST DYNAMIC SUPERPOWER. (RWANDAN
ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT U.S. CHINA POLICY, INCIDENTALLY,
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WERE ECHOED TO US LATER -- IN A CRITICAL VEIN -- BY
SOVIET AMABASSADOR RYKOV.)

9 NO RWANDANS WE SPOKE TO, DURING LONG DAY OF CELEBRA-
TIONS AND SINCE, VOICED ANY ALARM AT CHINESE/KOREAN
INROADS OR HINTED CONCERN AT ANY INSIDIOUS INFLUENCE AT
WORK ON RWANDAN TRADITIONS. INSTEAD, LIKE MME HABYARI-
MANA HERSELF, THEY POINTED WITH PRIDE AT PAGEANTRY AND
PRECISION OF CHILDREN'S MASS ENSEMBLE, AND THEY DREW OUR
ATTENTION TO PRESIDENT'S OWN MODERATE, INTELLIGENT
NATIONAL DAY SPEECH REVIEWING ACHIEVEMENTS AND SHORT-
COMINGS OF 2ND REPUBLIC. AND THERE WAS INDEED SOME
COMFORT IN FACT THAT CHINESE GUESTS DID NOT MINGLE,
SEEMED BORED AT FOOTBALL MATCH AND THOROUGHLY UNCOMFOR-
TABLE AT FANCY-DRESS BALL, AND SMOKED HEAVILY AND
NERVOUSLY THROUGHOUT.

10. COMMENT: THERE IS NO DOUBT IN OUR MINDS THAT
RWANDANS ARE EXPLOITING "CHINA OPTION" PARTLY -- IF NOT
PRINCIPALLY -- IN AN ATTEMPT TO COUNTER SOVIET/CUBAN
PRESENCE THEY SEE THREATENING CENTRAL AFRICAN REGION,
AND GOR LEADERS EVIDENTLY BELIEVE THEY CAN HANDLE ANY
SUBVERSIVE OR OTHER RISKS WHICH THIS OPTION MAY ENTAIL.
WE ARE MUCH LESS SURE. KOREAN-DESIGNED TRAPPINGS AND
PRO-CHINESE PANDERINGS AT NATIONAL DAY FETE WERE SUPER-
FICIAL, TO BE SURE; BUT FOR SOME OF US THEY SYMBOLIZED
A POTENTIALLY MORE SUBTLE, PERSUASIVE INFLUENCE (PAR-
TICULARLY AMONG IMPRESSIONABLE RWANDAN YOUTH) THAN THE
MORE HEAVY-HANDED SOVIET/CUBAN VERSION. IT IS DIFFICULT
TO IMAGINE THAT THOUSANDS OF RWANDAN YOUTH AND SOLDIERS,
WHO WITH GOR BLESSING MUST HAVE SPENT UNTOLD HOURS
REHEARSING THAT BIZARRE EXTRAVAGANZA, COULD BE LEFT
TOTALLY UNAFFECTED BY THE EXPERIENCE.
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1. WHETHER RWANDA'S AUTHENTIC TRADITIONS HOLD FIRM, OR
WHETHER THEY ARE ULTIMATELY SWAYED IN FAVOR OF ASIAN-
STYLE AUTHORITARIANISM (OR INDEED IN FAVOR OF OUR OWN
EQUALLY FOREIGN VALUES) IS OF COURSE RWANDA'S BUSINESS.
WE ARE MORE DISTURBED THAT GOR SEEMS TO BE PLAYING

PEKING'S GAME UNDER IMPRESSION THAT IT HAS OUR TACIT

BLESSING, OR IN IMITATION OF A STRATEGY IT ATTRIBUTES TO U.S. WE ARE ALREADY PLAGUED ENOUGH BY GOR ALIGNMENT WITH PYONGYANG ON KOREAN UNIFICATION ISSUE, AND CHINESE DEVELOPMENT AID IS ALREADY HELD UP TO SHOW HOW INEFFECTIVE OUR OWN EFFORTS ARE. A FULL-FLEDGED CHINESE MILITARY PRESENCE HERE, PARTICULARLY ONE RESPONDING TO REQUESTS WE OURSELVES HAVE TURNED DOWN, IN THE END WILL PRODUCE MANY MORE HEADACHES FOR US THAN FOR THE SOVIETS.

12. WE SUBMIT THAT RWANDA'S "CHINA OPTION," IF IT CONTINUES TO BLOSSOM, WILL MAKE IT HARDER, NOT EASIER, TO ACHIEVE OUR REAL OBJECTIVES IN RWANDA (SEE GORM) -- NOT LEAST OF ALL THOSE IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD. WE WILL CONTINUE TO STRESS TO RWANDANS, FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, THAT WE DO NOT SEE PRC AND DPRK TIES AS REALISTIC SOLUTION TO THEIR SECURITY PROBLEMS, WHICH CAN ONLY BE ATTENUATED BY IMPROVED REGIONAL COLLABORATION AMONG AFRICANS THEMSELVES.

13. OUR ARGUMENTS WOULD CARRY MUCH MORE WEIGHT, HOWEVER, IF SOMEHOW WE COULD BACK THEM UP WITH SPEEDY, EFFECTIVE MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO THOSE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS ALREADY UNDERWAY (E.G., CEPGL), ESPECIALLY IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FIELD.
CRIGLER

NOTE BY OC/T: TELEGRAM DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.
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